



## Christopher C. Wheeler

Partner

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Christopher Wheeler is a trial lawyer and civil litigator with a focus on antitrust and complex healthcare litigation. He is a member of Farella's New Business Committee and a founding partner of the firm's Healthcare Litigation and Investigations practice.

Chris's antitrust practice spans state and federal courts. In the landmark antitrust class action against the dominant hospital system in Northern California, Chris led the Farella team that, along with co-counsel and the California Attorney General, obtained a \$575 million settlement and historic injunctive relief on behalf of a certified class of California corporations, government entities, and union trusts.

Chris brings a deep background in economics and market regulation to his antitrust and complex litigation practice. During the U.S. financial crisis, he served as vice president and deputy director of the Committee on Capital Markets Regulation, where he led one of the first investigations into the regulatory failures contributing to the crisis. Chris began his career at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

Chris's trial and litigation experience is varied. He successfully defended a leading Silicon Valley company in a patent license arbitration against a competitor—backed by one of the world's largest private equity firms—that was seeking tens of millions of dollars in unpaid royalties. Following three years of litigation and an evidentiary hearing lasting 25 days, the arbitrator sanctioned the competitor for more than it recovered in unpaid royalties. Chris also has prosecuted and tried to verdict a number of criminal cases as a "loaner" Assistant District Attorney in the San Francisco District Attorney's Office. His jury verdicts have been upheld on appeal. *People v. Alcauter-Martinez*, App. No. 15-008044, slip op. (S.F. Super. Ct. App. Div. Mar. 5, 2018).

In his *pro bono* practice, Chris has represented indigent tenants in unlawful detainer actions and victims of elder abuse. He has also won political asylum for refugee families, including a Laotian Hmong veteran of the CIA "secret army" and three generations of survivors of the Liberian civil war.

### Memberships and Affiliations

- President, Harvard Law School Association of Northern California
- Member, Executive Committee, Harvard Law School Association
- Member, Antitrust Practice Group, American Health Law Association
- Member, Antitrust Law Section, American Bar Association
- Member, Antitrust and Business Regulation Section, Bar Association of San Francisco
- Member, Litigation Section Executive Committee, Bar Association of San Francisco (2016-2017)

## Experience

### Historic \$575 Million Settlement With Sutter Health in Antitrust Class Action

Represent UFCW & Employers Benefit Trust (UEBT) and a certified class of direct purchasers of hospital services in seeking preliminary approval of a historic settlement reached on the eve of trial in the landmark

### Services

- Antitrust
- Business Litigation
- Financial Services
- Fintech
- Healthcare
- Securities and Commodities Litigation

### Education

- Harvard Law School (J.D., 2002)
- Williams College (B.A., 1996)  
• *summa cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa

### Bar Admissions

- California

antitrust class action against Sutter Health, the largest hospital system in Northern California. Sutter has agreed to pay \$575,000,000 in monetary relief and to comply with comprehensive injunctive relief, including an independent monitor who will police Sutter's compliance with the proposed final judgment over a 10-year period.

#### **Rebar Fabricator and Installer Antitrust and Unfair Competition Litigation**

Represent a fabricator and installer of rebar in an antitrust and unfair competition against the largest manufacturer and fabricator of rebar in the United States. The action in the Northern District of California alleges violations of the Sherman Act, the Cartwright Act, and California's Unfair Competition Law and Unfair Business Practices Act in connection with an unlawful territorial restriction and predatory pricing.

#### **Manufacturing Company Breach of Fiduciary Duty Litigation**

Represented a Modesto-based manufacturing company in an action in Stanislaus County Superior Court against two former executives who had secretly paid themselves approximately \$60 million in compensation in breach of their fiduciary obligations to the company. The case settled on the eve of trial following motions in limine.

#### **Digital Couponing Technology Company Patent License Arbitration**

Defended a leading Silicon Valley digital couponing technology company in a patent license arbitration brought by a competitor—backed by one of the world's largest private equity firms—that was seeking tens of millions of dollars in unpaid royalties. Following three years of litigation and an evidentiary hearing lasting 25 days, the arbitrator sanctioned the competitor for more than it recovered in unpaid royalties.

#### **Cryptocurrency Exchange Interpleader Action**

Represented a cryptocurrency exchange in an interpleader action in the Northern District of California involving a dispute between a cryptocurrency company and its founders. The novel action resulted in the first known interpleader deposit of cryptocurrency with a federal district court.

## **Publications**

February 22, 2021

#### **Pandemic Restriction Challenges Face Uphill Battle in California**

*Law360*

January 19, 2021

#### **New Year, New CMS Price Transparency Rule For Hospitals**

*Health Affairs Blog*

June 1, 2020

#### **What Retailers Need to Know About California's Price-Gouging Laws**

*Retail Leader*

May 5, 2020

#### **Testing California's Price Gouging Statute**

*Law360*

## **Outside the Office**

Chris lives in Alameda with his wife and three children. Last season, he coached girls' 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>-grade basketball in the Alameda Youth Basketball league. He is a parishioner at St. Joseph's Basilica in Alameda, a member

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of United States Masters Swimming, and is an avid open-water swimmer.